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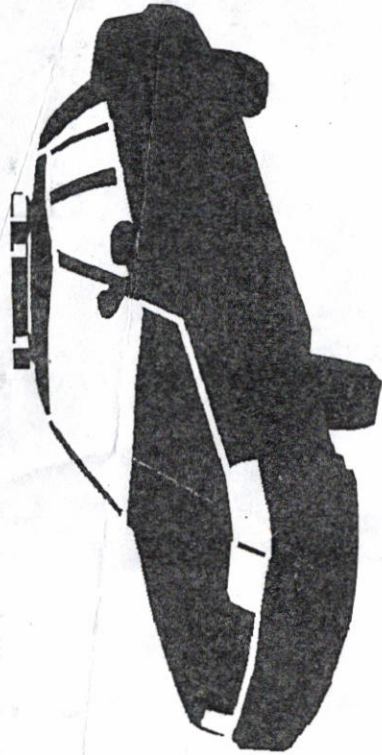


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**ALLiance**  
a journal of theory and strategy

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## *Being Sovereign*

excerpts from  
*The Indomitus Report*  
including  
"The Morpheus Proposal"

The new book by Jim Davidson comes out in Autumn 2009. Essays on self sovereignty, individual liberty, free market money, the space frontier, longevity, nanotechnology, and new countries. **Pre-sales \$14** includes domestic shipping. All pre-sales to be autographed by the author. 623 pages plus notes

Jim Davidson is a world traveler, author, and entrepreneur. See wikipedia for biography. Sample essays at [www.indomitus.net](http://www.indomitus.net).

Send \$14 payable to  
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### A Note from Z's

Thanks for picking up the ALLiance #3. I'm very excited to announce a partnership between ALLiance and Corvus Distribution. Hard copies of ALLiance can now be ordered through Corvus' online store – <http://www.corvusdistribution.org/shop/>. This partnership will allow for the widest distribution at the lowest price.

I'm also very happy to announce that James from the Tulsa Alliance of the Libertarian Left (<http://www.meetup.com/TulsaAnarchy/>) has joined the *ALLiance Journal* project. His influence is all over this issue. Aside from writing *The Weird Case for Market Means to Socialist Ends*, he also provided the graphics found on pages 1, 13, 18, and 31.

Of course I would also like to thank everyone who has written letters, donated money, and made suggestions. Veteran zinester James N. Dawson wrote a letter that made me think a lot. It was posted on my website and garnered a number of responses. It can be read at [http://chrislempa.wordpress.com/2009/06/04/letter\\_of\\_comment\\_to\\_alliance1/](http://chrislempa.wordpress.com/2009/06/04/letter_of_comment_to_alliance1/). I encourage everyone to take a look at his letter.

On a closing note, please consider submitting to the next issue. I will consider anything of any length. Articles, studies, poems, songs, drawings, pictures are all welcomed. The deadline is November 1, 2009. What do you have to lose?

Thanks for your support.  
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### Online Resources

Agorist Action Alliance – [www.agorism.info/](http://www.agorism.info/)

Alliance of the Libertarian Left – [www.libertarianleft.org](http://www.libertarianleft.org)

Anarchist FAQ – <http://www.anarchyfaq.org/>

Anarchist News – [www.anarchistnews.org](http://www.anarchistnews.org)

AnarchoBlogs – [www.anarchoblogs.org](http://www.anarchoblogs.org)

Association of Libertarian Feminists – [www.alf.org](http://www.alf.org)

Blogosphere of the Libertarian Left- [www.libertarianleft.bravehost.com](http://www.libertarianleft.bravehost.com)

Center for a Stateless Society – <http://c4ss.org>

Feminist Blogs - <http://feministblogs.org/>

Forums of the Libertarian Left – [www.libertarianleft.freeforums.org](http://www.libertarianleft.freeforums.org)

Invisible Molotov Distro – <http://invisiblemolotov.wordpress.com>

Libertarian Enterprise - <http://www.ncc-1776.org/>

Libertarian Left Aggregator – [www.leftlibertarian.org](http://www.leftlibertarian.org)

Liberty Activism Repository - <http://libertyactivism.info>

Molinari Institute – [www.praxeology.net/molinari.htm](http://www.praxeology.net/molinari.htm)

Rational Review News Digest – [www.rationalreview.com/news](http://www.rationalreview.com/news)

Strike the Root – [www.strike-the-root.com](http://www.strike-the-root.com)

has read his *Studies in Mutualist Political Economy* or *Organization Theory* and has become aware of, or if your me daydreamed about, Ralph Borsodi and Peter Kropotkin's discussions of the potentials found in the home/factory. The locus of production in Sir Thomas More's Utopia was also the home. I think after reading Carson and returning to More you will find that our little movement has a grander history and might not be so little as we thought. From Book One: "Simple theft is not so great a crime that it ought to cost a man his head, yet no punishment however severe can withhold a man from robbery when he has no other way to eat."

### **Additional Suggestions** **Theory/History**

- **Left Liberty** a journal of mutualist anarchist history and theory, *Corvus Distribution*.
- **Iron Fist Behind the Invisible Hand** by Kevin Carson, *Invisible Molotov Distribution*.
- **Calculated Chaos** by Butler Shaffer
- **An Agorist Primer** by Samuel Edward Konkin III (aka SEK3)
- **Socialist Ends, Market Means** (Five Essays by Gary Chartier), *Center for a Stateless Society/Tulsa ALL*
- **Temporary Autonomous Zone** by Hakim Bey

### **Strategy**

- **New Libertarian Manifesto** by SEK3
- **Rules for Radicals** by Saul Alinsky
- **Trajectory of Change** by Michael Albert
- **Liberating Learning** by Darian Worden, *New Jersey ALL*.

### **DIY**

- **Toolbox for Sustainable City Living** by Scott Kellogg and Stacy Pettigrew
- **Making Shit and Doing Things**, *Microcosm Publishing*.
- **Urban Homestead** by Kelly Coyne and Erik Knutzen.

## **Hermes in the Agora** **(Communication, Cultural Mediation and the Anarchic Spirit)** **By Nick Louras**

### **I.**

It is Hermes who concerns us here, god of language and magic, the subtle, but all-powerful, spirit of communication, invoked with every act of social intercourse, embodied in every word that reaches another's ear.

At its most simple, *Anarchy* is Hermes unfettered.

So long as our modes of communication are restricted, directed, manipulated and controlled, there can be no liberty.



### **II.**

But nor do tyrants possess any power *except* where individuals assent to use their language.

State is an illusion. Tin stars and six-shooters are real; police are not real. Flags are magical/demonic sigils imbued with power through fear, false-pride and consensus belief. In every parliament on earth, powdered whores enact a dreadful Grand Guignol and the people throw roses, for a moment believing it all true.

Antique "Movement" tactics drape flesh upon this ghost-State. To march in the streets is to recognize the authority you march against.

Let us begin to live free by admitting this much: Our enemy is a false paradigm.

### **III.**

There are no top-down conspiracies. All conspiracies are grassroots. The average person will insensibly and emotionally defend the status quo. They will defend it with a tooth-and-nail tenacity in direct inverse proportion to the challenge of libertarianism. They will do this without prompt or manipulation because it is their *life* that is being challenged.

Whether they like it or not, whether they know it or not, whether by design, by accident, by weakness, or boredom, most people have thrown their lot in with the status quo.

#### IV.

Important Questions that might lead to alternate paradigms are never asked. Thought has been arrested and made to stagnate by the triumph of false dichotomies. Ludicrous either/or premises redirect human passion away from creative imagination into the wasteland of dogmatism. Fascism vs Communism, Left vs Right, Control vs Bedlam, Theism vs Materialism, Religion vs Humanism, Pragmatism vs Idealism.

These are tombstones, not choices!

False dichotomies are the product of mediation. There is no discourse outside The Media. We have delegated all conversation to “big” platforms that ostensibly put us in universal/instantaneous contact, but in reality “speak on our behalf.” These media outlets are owned/licensed/controlled by corporations, advertisers and government. They exist for no purpose except to reinforce the current paradigm. Purveyors of “news” are infamous perpetrators, especially when it comes to the false dichotomy,



presenting every “story” as a conflict between two hyperbolic groups: corporations/labor unions, warmongers/demonstrators, Republicans/Democrats.

By limiting the argument to two non-insurrectionary options, they are assured of the continued dominance of the culture. All media therefore functions as an advertisement for the paradigm. Likewise: individuals who advance media-generated either/or arguments (see III).

There can be no pure interaction, no spontaneous culture, when everyone is using identical channels of communication, transmitting corporate logos and banner ads with their correspondences, or worse, conforming their identities to a template.

Notwithstanding early cyberpunk fantasy, it was inevitable that the

### Some Recommended Reading from the Tulsa ALL By James Tuttle

I hope to provide food for thought and vindication of general left-libertarian theory and strategy.

1. **The Debates of Liberty** by Wendy McElroy, ISBN 0-7391-0473-X

Wendy McElroy’s “Overview of Individualist Anarchism, 1881-1908” is not only a fantastic introduction to individualist anarchism particularly and anarchism in general, but she presents fair exposition to those core controversies that have been debated by anarchists forever.

2. **Concerning Women** by Suzanne La Follette, ISBN-10: 040504464X

Suzanne Le Follette was a friend of Albert J. Nock and a contributor and fellow editor of *The Freeman*. She was libertarian and a feminist that in the 1920s wrote radical insights like, “The State always represents the organized interest of a dominant class; therefore the subjection of other classes may be said to benefit the State, and their emancipation may be opposed as a danger to the State.”

3. **Whipping Girl** by Julia Serano, ISBN (10) 1-58005-154-5  
Julia Serano is a scientist, writer, a poet and a transgender activist. In *Whipping Girl* she illustrates the difficulties of being a transgendered woman in a sexist/cissexist culture and that activism cannot be an incremental process, for some it’s a decision between life and death.
4. **The Politics of Reality** by Marilyn Frye, ISBN 0-89594-099-X  
For those that have been around the left-libertarian blogs of Charles “RadGeek” Johnson or Professor Roderick T. Long’s Austro-Athenian Empire will be familiar with Marilyn Frye’s essay *Oppression*. I am here to formally recommend the book that contains such a beloved essay. *The Politics of Reality* will take you through Marilyn Frye’s process of recognizing, identifying and coming to terms with sexism. Once we have a target we can take aim and take it down.
5. **Utopia** by Sir Thomas More, ISBN 0-393-96145-1  
By now it might be requirement to know of Kevin Carson if one is to claim left-libertarianism and get away with it. For everyone that

## Left-Libertarianism and the Weird Case for Market Means to Socialist Ends.

By James Tuttle, *Tulsa Alliance of the Libertarian Left*

In the Political Zoo, amongst all the established Political animals, from right-wing hawks and left-Wing doves, from Democratic donkeys to Republican elephants, by far the strangest of all the animals, to the uninitiated, is the left-libertarian. To the other members of the animal kingdom, the left-libertarian is a zebra with blue and orange stripes, marked by clashing colors that render its herd-based camouflage useless. To some skeptics, the clash of colors looks like a warning: "Poison! Do not ingest!"

In five essays the Tulsa ALL has collected here, Gary Chartier offers a very clear and introductory case that left-libertarian theory is not a clash of colors or a source of poison, but a welcome antidote to tired categories. He argues in the first two essays that left-libertarianism is authentically libertarian—but, also authentically leftist. In the third and fourth, he engages in and offers remedies for apparent tensions between the spirit of socialism on the one hand and, on the other, socialism as understood by vulgar libertarians and practiced by state socialists. He offers a way of understanding socialism as a position that ought to be attractive to libertarians. In the fifth and final essay, he applies left-libertarian insights and offers a theoretically sound approach to the high-volume, low-insight health-care debate. I can't help but spoil the ending: to achieve goals, there's no better strategy than unleashing the wonders of the freed market.

*Gary Chartier is a member of the Center for a Stateless Society's advisory panel. He blogs at <http://www.liberalaw.blogspot.com>. *Socialist Ends, Market Means* (Five Essays by Gary Chartier) can be downloaded at <http://c4ss.org/content/1007>.*



Internet would become ad space – the same way the rest of our culture has (why wouldn't it? The same people are using it!).

Indeed, technology has evolved into a means of homogenization *and* alienation. Home and personal media devices removed physical proximity and the shared experience. The forms of art and communication that were transferred from the public sphere to the domestic/bodily then dried up. (For example, truly independent cinema died with the drive-in and the local art-house; now only studios owned by corporations which also own multiplex chains continue to release films theatrically.)

### V.

The government cynically declares itself an arbiter, the citizen's advocate against big business. Of course, this uninterrupted sea of commercial homogeneity and Monolithic Culture is a direct result of government favoritism and collusion with corporations to subvert truly free ("Hermetic") exchange.

Commercial media licenses, subsidies, interstate commerce laws, property and bartering taxes (i.e. punishment of alternative systems), nationalization and "public good" have all been employed to force the spread of Monolithic Culture. The push has been fast and overwhelming, with holdouts inevitably running afoul of eminent domain, rezoning, and governing-board fiat.

Even those individuals clever and brave enough to pursue lives outside the norm are shackled to the system by bureaucracy, taxation, ID/insurance requirements and monotonous surveillance. The state depends on universal adherence to one way of life for its revenue, its mandate, and its ability to act unchecked; thus renegades cannot be tolerated.

And so we watch populations move through the mainstream culture: irritable, unhappy, dangerous, they stare at the same television shows, eat the same poisonous food, serve their sentences in some variation on the same soul-crushing job (cynically antagonistic to those who suggest a ludic freedom).

### VI.

Make no mistake, we are champions of the market: a free exchange of

goods and ideas.

Any vital & creative society depends for its life's blood on the agora. Exceptional imagination & ingenuity command reward. Those with means must outfit adventurers seeking their own. We are no self-flagellating ascetics. There is joy in wealth (and we do not mean the empty "purchasing power" of the prefabricated consumer, but the abundance of the pasha. Every man a king! Exceed the nations of the earth in splendor!). The (specious) argument that corporatism is a natural and inevitable outgrowth of the free market comes relentlessly from quarters with a vested interest in *different* modes of authority, and the most vocal champions of a so-called "free market" are only too happy to agree. A most tedious false dichotomy arises: the various Death-Marts on one hand and the most despicable anti-creative revenge-seekers on the other.

We reject this outright.

Corporate behemoths may borrow the language and (to a lesser extent) form of market participation. In truth, they are designed to have as little contact with the market as possible, functioning more like psychic infrastructure (the machinery of mass production/consumption), funded by the state and in turn generating enough tax revenue to perpetuate the state's business.

Here, now and forever, we stand in opposition to Monolithic Culture, whether corporate, marxist, theocratic, or scientific-materialist.

## VII.

It's no accident that Hermes is *also* god of the marketplace, protector of merchants (and thieves). Communication can only exist where there is multiplicity of form, *interplay* between sovereign individuals.

Hermes does not care about "identities": anarcho-capitalist, mutualist, co-operative, communalist. Whenever people come together to trade, barter or give freely, an *agora* is created.



too emphatic a manner. So hearken not to them, but list! Next winter when the cold blasts are creeping through the rents in your seedy garments, when the frost is biting your feet through the holes in your worn-out shoes, and when all wretchedness seems to have centered in and upon you, when misery has marked you for her own and life has become a burden and existence a mockery, when you have walked the streets by day and slept upon hard boards by night, and at last determine by your own hand to take your life, - for you would rather go out into utter nothingness than to longer endure an existence which has become such a burden - so, perchance, you determine to dash yourself into the cold embrace of the lake rather than longer suffer thus. But halt, before you commit this last tragic act in the drama of your simple existence. Stop! Is there nothing you can do to insure those whom you are about to orphan, against a like fate? The waves will only dash over you in mockery of your rash act; but stroll you down the avenues of the rich and look through the magnificent plate windows into their voluptuous homes, and here you will discover the *very identical robbers* who have despoiled you and yours. Then let your tragedy be enacted *here!* Awaken them from their wanton sport at your expense! Send forth your petition and let them read it by the red glare of destruction. Thus when you cast "one long lingering look behind" you can be assured that you have spoken to these robbers in the only language which they have ever been able to understand, for they have never yet deigned to notice any petition from their slaves that they were not *compelled* to read by the red glare bursting from the cannon's mouths, or that was not handed to them upon the point of the sword. You need no organization when you make up your mind to present this kind of petition. In fact, an organization would be a detriment to you; but each of you hungry tramps who read these lines, avail yourselves of those little methods of warfare which Science has placed in the hands of the poor man, and you will become a power in this or any other land.

*Learn the use of explosives!*

**Dedicated to the tramps by Lucy E. Parsons.**

*Born in Texas, 1853, probably as a slave, Lucy Parsons was an African-, Native- and Mexican-American anarchist labor activist who fought against the injustices of poverty, racism, capitalism and the state her entire life. Learn more about her at <http://www.lucyparsonspj.org>. Her collected writings can be found at <http://www.charleshkerr.net>.*

dollars' worth of wealth, which you did not then, do not now, and unless you ACT, never will, own any part in? Do you not know that when you were harnessed to a machine and that machine harnessed to steam, and thus you toiled your 10, 12 and 16 hours in the 24, that during this time in all these years you received only enough of your labor product to furnish yourself the bare, coarse necessities of life, and that when you wished to purchase anything for yourself and family it always had to be of the cheapest quality? If you wanted to go anywhere you had to wait until Sunday, so little did you receive for your unremitting toil that you dare not stop for a moment, as it were? And do you not know that with all your squeezing, pinching and economizing you never were enabled to keep but a few days ahead of the wolves of want? And that at last when the caprice of your employer saw fit to create an artificial famine by limiting production, that the fires in the furnace were extinguished, the iron horse to which you had been harnessed was stilled; the factory door locked up, you turned upon the highway a tramp, with hunger in your stomach and rags upon your back?

Yet your employer told you that it was overproduction which made him close up. Who cared for the bitter tears and heart-pangs of your loving wife and helpless children, when you bid them a loving "God bless you" and turned upon the tramper's road to seek employment elsewhere? I say, who cared for those heartaches and pains? You were only a tramp now, to be execrated and denounced as a "worthless tramp and a vagrant" by that very class who had been engaged all those years in robbing you and yours. Then can you not see that the "good boss" or the "bad boss" cuts no figure whatever? that you are the common prey of both, and that their mission is simply robbery? Can you not see that it is the INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM and not the "boss" which must be changed?

Now, when all these bright summer and autumn days are going by and you have no employment, and consequently can save up nothing, and when the winter's blast sweeps down from the north and all the earth is wrapped in a shroud of ice, hearken not to the voice of the hypocrite who will tell you that it was ordained of God that "the poor ye have always"; or to the arrogant robber who will say to you that you "drank up all your wages last summer when you had work, and that is the reason why you have nothing now, and the workhouse or the workyard is too good for you; that you ought to be shot." And shoot you they will if you present your petitions in

## VIII.

But always stifling this "Hermetic" agora, preventing it from taking shape in the open, is the false-market of the dominant paradigm. To get anywhere, the state's stranglehold on services, force and money must be removed.

Maybe somewhere there's someone who'd like to employ the government in... some capacity. Fine. Then let them buy the services they want piecemeal on an open market. Likewise, if someone wants to carry the U.S. Dollar as opposed to a currency backed with gold, silver, or seashells, they should feel free to do that as well.

Competition, if sustained, will inevitably lead to the death of government.



Lysander Spooner's American Letter Mail Company lasted five years before it was forced out of business for challenging the (still extant) monopoly of the U.S. Postal Service. During that time, the company sent mail from New York to Boston for 5 cents, drastically undercutting the 18 cents charged by the USPS. Before threats of imprisonment and endless legal battles shut Spooner down, he had forced the government's rate to 3 cents.

In the 1840s, America was less than a hundred years old. Fascism (in the literal sense of a statist economy) was still being codified into law. Spooner caught the government by surprise. At first, its courts had no way of stopping him without putting the last nail in the coffin of "Constitutional Democracy". We doubt something of this scale could be pulled off today. Over a hundred and fifty years of precedence favoring state monopolies have left neither the timeframe nor the loopholes to permit it.

We *do* hope modern-day Spooners will emerge despite this, but real results can be obtained far less dramatically.

There are whole markets that the government can't reach, let alone control – black and grey markets, for instance; cash markets – and these provide us with the starting place for a free agora.

## IX.

There are peaceful individuals everywhere involved in alternative-market enterprise, small-scale pot farming, under-the-table transactions, and the like, but few of them view their economies in a political/ontological light, and fewer still keep their eye on the big picture.

We must do more than create an alternative market; we must create an alternative reality.

The authoritarian paradigm brands every free man and woman a criminal. That is the height of nihilism for anyone who accepts it. A new worldview is the only answer.

This project – Anarchy – is about remaking the shape of culture and cultural interaction, each of us from our own personal paradigms, interacting always from a position of physical, intellectual and spiritual autonomy. The loose consensus reality of those participating must necessarily change. We're talking about new "maps," new aesthetics, new mores, new *language*, and this requires a certain magic.

It is up to each of us to reach this place on his/her own, nor is there one reliable path. Certainly the likeminded will attract one another, and this is good, wherever we can build our world with friends, we will find the labor easy, but many will find their convictions, lifestyles, politics, and dreams incompatible with others, and there's nothing wrong with that. In the end we'll all find our way somehow.

Our hearts will be our compasses, here as in all things.

## X.

And looking back, perhaps, we'll find that we shared, if not a set of tactics, a loose credo:

1. *To subvert the status quo.* Our lives are antithetical to the Monolithic Culture. Our actions should be too. That doesn't mean illegal, per se, but it can. The problem with this is that certain acts appear subversive, but are really status quo. Ultimately all "tactics" suffer this fate. As soon as enough people become aware of something it becomes fodder for satire and cannibalism by advertiser-sorcerers. A good example of this is graffiti, which has

1970s, was swept by a series of CIA-assisted military coups (just Google "Kissinger" and "Operation Condor"). The CIA may (or may not) have assisted with the torture, but God alone knows how many people were mutilated, murdered and disappeared in basement dungeons run by people the CIA put in power.

You want ample ground to "fear your own government"? All you have to do is Google "Palmer Raids," "COINTELPRO," "McCarran Internal Security Act," or "Garden Plot." Or read up on the history of federal strikebreaking in the Pullman Strike, the copper wars and coal wars, and even under—yes, gasp, him—good ol' liberal Harry Truman.

*CASS Research Associate Kevin Carson is a contemporary mutualist author and individualist anarchist whose written work includes Studies in Mutualist Political Economy and Organization Theory: An Individualist-Anarchist Perspective, both of which are freely available online. Carson has also written for a variety of internet-based journals and blogs, including Just Things, The Art of the Possible, the P2P Foundation and his own Mutualist Blog.*

**To Tramps**  
by Lucy E. Parsons

*Originally published in Alarm, October 4, 1884.*

TO TRAMPS,  
The Unemployed, the Disinherited, and Miserable.  
A word to the 35,000 now tramping the streets of this great city, with hands in pockets, gazing listlessly about you at the evidence of wealth and pleasure of which you own no part, not sufficient even to purchase yourself a bit of food with which to appease the pangs of hunger now gnawing at your vitals. It is with you and the hundreds of thousands of others similarly situated in this great land of plenty, that I wish to have a word.



Have you not worked hard all your life, since you were old enough for your labor to be of use in the production of wealth? Have you not toiled long, hard and laboriously in producing wealth? And in all those years of drudgery do you not know you have produced thousand upon thousands of

their duties to the "common good."

But make no mistake: the kind of world maintained and run by these "little Eichmanns" is, indeed, evil. Mass-murder has been very much a bipartisan policy of the American state.

It's almost comical to see retired CIA officers appearing as pet liberals on Olbermann and Maddow, solemnly reassuring viewers that the CIA absolutely never did things like waterboarding before 9-11, because it was "clearly illegal." Good God, have you people never heard of Philip Fucking Agee?!! Maybe people with official GS ratings and paychecks from Langley never directly pulled any fingernails, true enough. But God knows enough fingernails were pulled and enough people waterboarded by monsters put in power by the CIA, or trained by the Green Berets or School of the Americas.



There are the hundreds of thousands killed by Suharto (the Jakarta station chief helpfully compiled a roundup list for the Indonesian military) and by Mobutu. And the reason: the sensible realists in American policy circles, with no malice aforethought, considered a rational world order managed by giant corporations to be in the general interest for long-term prosperity. A world in which the giant corporations had to buy oil on terms set by Sukarno, or copper and uranium on terms set by Lumumba, was simply unthinkable to them.



In Guatemala, the sensible realists found it similarly intolerable for Arbenz to give the land to its rightful owners to the detriment of UFC. Since he was overthrown in 1953, hundreds of thousands of people have been massacred by military governments and death squads in Guatemala alone. In Central America as a whole, the death toll from

death squads fighting to protect the region's landed oligarchs extends into the millions. The entire continent of South America, in the 1960s and

long been used for "guerrilla marketing." Same goes for protesting (which is pure cliché now, appearing mostly in state-sponsored anti-smoking ads). Oddly, sex, whether illicit or not, and drugs, still maintain a certain sense of danger and taboo. We recommend using sex wherever it is subversive.

2. *To affirm life.* We don't mean antagonistic when we say subversive. The point isn't to be *against* the Monolithic Culture, it's to be *for* a personal and fulfilling Other Culture. Think positive! Follow every pleasure and turn from every restriction. Cynicism and martyrdom belong to the death-cults. Abandon any work that isn't motivated by joy!
3. *To affirm the Romantic.* Romance is forbidden by mainstream society. Anything with a hint of beauty/danger/inspiration is promptly seized, sterilized and put to work as a reaffirmation of the Culture (it wasn't enough to kill the Gnostic Jesus, he had to be made a symbol of the Abrahamic religion and the Roman state he had sought to topple).

Artifice and beauty are weapons. Love and art are weapons. Use them to create a new language; Hermes will aid you. Employ symbols and sigils, codes and ceremonies, invoke strange gods, practice sex-magic, do whatever it takes to establish the reality of the personal *outside* the normative.

Nick Louras

### Tax Increases Could Deepen the Recession by Fred Foldvary

The worst time to increase taxes is during a severe recession. Yet that is what the policies of the Obama administration and Congress are doing. The proposed federal medical services program would raise the tax rate paid by the highest incomes by 5.4 percent. Individuals who do not have medical insurance would either be required to obtain it or pay a hefty fine. Congress is also considering a tax on employer-paid medical benefits.

In addition, the tax cuts enacted in 2001 and 2003



will expire on January 1, 2011. Congress will most likely let the cuts expire for higher incomes, amounting to a tax rate increase of 4.5 percent. The top income tax rate will return to 39.6 percent. Add the 5.4 percent new medical care tax, and we get a tax rate of 45 percent.

The "cap and trade" program passed by Congress amounts to yet another tax. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the price hikes passed on by the firms that have to buy the permits would cost the average lower-income household 3.3% of its after-tax income every year. For the high incomes, the tax rate increase would be 1.7 percent. Add that to the 45 percent rate for a total of 46.7 percent marginal tax rate, the rate on additional income.

The states also tax income. In California, the tax rate on the highest incomes is 10.3 percent. Add that to the 46.7 percent federal rate to get a total marginal tax rate of 57 percent. To that we need to add the medicare tax of 3 percent for a total of 60 percent.

The social security tax has an upper limit, so what lower income earners save, in not paying the highest marginal tax rates, is offset by the total 15.3 percent rate for Social Security and Medicare.

Many politicians think that they can increase taxes on the rich, and the taxpayers will just reduce their lavish spending. It does not work that way. One does not become rich by not caring about money. It is well known in economics that taxes impose an excess burden or deadweight loss, a reduction in production and investment.

The effect of taxes is based on the tax rate on the next amount of income, and the deadweight loss generally increases by the square of the tax increase. Thus if the tax rate doubles, the deadweight loss quadruples. So the sharply higher marginal tax rates that are coming in the next few years will impose a substantially greater deadweight loss on the economy. Since investment is based on the expected gains in the future, the expectation of higher taxes is already affecting decisions today.

The recession that began in 2007 was decelerating by mid 2009. The financial crisis was easing, and the economic signals indicated that the recession would bottom out in late 2009. But now that the tax increases

U.S. took no interest in inter-Arab conflicts, and official lies about Kuwaiti incubator babies and massed Iraqi armor on the Saudi border. We've had massaged intelligence under Bush II to lie the country into another war with Iraq, clearly motivated by a "Great Game" with Russia for strategic control of the Persian Gulf and Caspian oil basins.



If anything, the centralized, bureaucratic structure of the corporate state promotes conspiracies as a side-effect. When three or four county commissioners meet informally at a barbecue in violation of freedom of information laws, and discuss using county equipment to pave the county executive's private access road, it doesn't take a crazy "conspiracy theorist" to believe it happens. Considering the tightness of the good ol' boy networks that control most local governments, it's almost remarkable when it doesn't happen.

Likewise, when society is controlled by a few hundred oligopoly corporations, a bunch of centralized government agencies, and a dozen giant media corporations, all united in an interlocking directorate with the same few thousand people shuffling constantly back and forth in a revolving door of leadership—well, of course conspiracies happen.

But the remarkable thing is just how unnecessary conspiracies are: they're just icing on the cake. The crimes of the corporate state, over the past century or so, have been overwhelmingly carried out, not by Snidely Whiplashes chortling with glee and twirling their moustaches, but by bureaucratic functionaries acting in sincere good faith that their policies were objectively required for the "public good." Such people spend their entire careers dutifully shuffling papers from their in-box to their out-box, ordering the deaths of millions in the process, without ever suspecting that what's good for GM really might not be good for America. A world dominated by a few hundred corporations wedded to the centralized state is the only, natural, and inevitable way of doing things. And any kind of "radicalism" that offers an alternative to that natural way of doing things must be nipped in the bud.

Most of the great evils carried out by the American state over the past century would have been carried out by such people without any conspiracies, with absolutely no guilt or shame, in full confidence that it was warranted by the objective requirements of the situation in light of

better to be owned by a Democrat—but they both clearly think of us as their livestock. Me, I'd rather the farm be run by the animals (minus the pigs, of course).

My main objection to “conspiracy theorists,” of the Schlafly/Smoot/Bircher type, is the weakness of their explanatory framework. To someone in Hofstadter’s “paranoid style of American politics,” all the nefarious acts of those running the state are motivated by personal cliques and ideological cabals: the Illuminati, Obama’s secret Marxism or Islamism, the lizard people, the Royals vs. the Vatican, the Rothschilds and Rockefellerers, etc.



In reality, most of the horrible things government does don’t require a conspiracy, or secret meetings at the Nazi Saucer Base inside the Hollow Earth, invoking Adam Weishaupt and the eye in the pyramid. They follow of necessity from the institutional and class structures into which our world is organized.

To be sure, contra Olbermann, there have been conspiracies; they are, in fact, fairly common. Hitler used SS provocateurs, in Polish uniforms, to harass ethnic Germans in Danzig and create a pretext for war (and anyone who doesn’t think American mainstream journalists would have reported the official story as straight news, in the same situation, must not have followed CNN coverage of the incident between Russia and Georgia last August).

If the people who accuse FDR of “foreknowledge” of Pearl Harbor have overreached themselves, there is nevertheless a preponderance of evidence that he was trying to goad the Japanese into firing the first shot and providing a pretext for war, and that his primary motivation was to secure American corporate control of the resources and markets disappearing into the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. It was his intention to initiate war with Japan, if necessary, if the Empire took over the oilfields of the Dutch East Indies.

Since then, we’ve had a CIA-engineered coup in Saigon to replace Diem with someone who would acquiesce to an American invasion of South Vietnam, and a fake “incident” in the Gulf of Tonkin to provide the pretext for such an invasion. We’ve had Bush I encouraging Kuwaiti slanted drilling on the Iraqi border, April Glaspie’s assurances to Saddam that the

are clearer and imminent, it could switch the change in the rate of decline from deceleration to another acceleration. Consumers are spending less, cutting back on debt and increasing savings. Economic investment in new capital goods has to lead the recovery. But a sharp tax increase will increase the cost of production and decrease the profits. The increase in marginal tax rates to 60 percent will surely have a large negative effect. Nobody knows how big the effect will be, but it could prevent the recovery and plunge the economy into an even deeper depression.

The goal of cap and trade, to reduce pollution, is worthy, but it should not be joined to an increase in taxes or revenues. It would be more effective to levy an explicit tax on pollution, and offset it with a reduction in income taxes. The total taxes paid would be the same, but the deadweight loss would be lower. Such a “green tax shift” would benefit both the economy and the environment.

Welfare statists seek higher taxes on the rich to redistribute to the poor, but this involves a hidden redistribution going the other way. Public works, civic services, and subsidies increase the rent and land value of the areas affected. Since most land value is owned by the rich, they get back much of what they pay in taxes from the implicit subsidy to their lands. It would be more efficient to simply tax their land value directly and not tax their labor and capital. Land having a fixed supply, a tax on land value has no deadweight loss.



While the great majority of people would have a net gain from an efficiency tax shift, from income and sales to land value and pollution, those with large land-value holdings would lose, and so the landed interests maintain a strong lobby opposing such a tax shift. The financial industry is their strong ally, since bankers like land as collateral for loans. When land values crash, the government bails out the banks and depositors, which is an indirect way of subsidizing real estate mortgages and thus indirectly land values.

The price society pays for the real estate subsidies is the heavy taxation of labor and the boom-bust economic cycles. The government passed a

stimulus bill, but now is inflicting an anti-stimulus in the form of higher taxes on productive activity. Evidently, the president and Congress would rather satisfy the landed interests than let the economy recover.

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## **Don't Tell Me, Show Me!**

### **A Quick Look at Insurgent Political Influence**

**By Darian Worden**

Political movements gain power when people perceive that the movement has something to offer them. A government is allowed to exist when a large number of people perceive it as supplying their needs, especially security and to a lesser extent infrastructure. To create a broad shift of allegiance away from the state (the institution of coercion) and towards the market (the aggregate of voluntary exchange), left libertarians should build market institutions that displace state services, and actively participate in them.

Ideology always guides action, so scholarship and debate are of critical importance. But ideology by itself will not build revolution; people with diverse needs must be given concrete reasons to be attracted to the ideology. They must be shown what anarchy can do for them.

This article provides some examples of how political allegiances are influenced through the provision of services. The examples describe violent groups, but they have things to teach besides violence. Revolutions centered on violence primarily promote violence. To replace the state with a voluntary order, left libertarians should build attractive alternatives.



**RESIST, REBEL, RECLAIM**

[www.libertyactivism.info](http://www.libertyactivism.info)

This article does not attempt to provide exhaustive studies. It highlights interesting cases that merit further analysis.

The first three examples I found online and discussed on [darianworden.com/blog](http://darianworden.com/blog) under the "info share" category. The last example describes how the most powerful state in history utilizes similar techniques as one part of Special Forces activities.

piece at Center for a Stateless Society, "The Democrats: Fake Party of Compassion," the Democrats have fully lived up to Nader's characterization of them: just the "liberal" head of the two-headed corporate party.

All the so-called "progressive" regulatory and welfare state policies created under the "Good Presidents" were made pursuant to government's function as (if you'll pardon the phrase) executive committee of the corporate capitalist ruling class. The stability of corporate capitalism, the need for predictable profits and stable markets, the need to counteract destabilizing tendencies toward overinvestment and underconsumption, have always been front and center in the consciousness of policymaking elites. That was the theme of Teddy Roosevelt's "Progressive" regulatory state, as recounted by Gabriel Kolko, and of FDR's New Deal as described by G. William Domhoff.

The Social Democratic or New Deal wing of those policymaking elites, in particular, have paid more attention to avoiding destabilizing polarization of wealth and income, and maintaining high levels of employment.

But the key economic policymaking roles, in Democratic administrations as well as Republican, have been held by corporate executives, corporate lawyers, and investment bankers. Ever hear of Bob Rubin or Tim Geithner? Yeah, a real bunch of fire-eating anticapitalists we got there. That's one reason I hold such contempt for "Joe the Plumber" and his screaming ignoramus: anyone who can seriously look at Obama's economic team and its policies, and suspect him of being a closet "Marxist," probably shouldn't be allowed to use scissors without adult supervision.

Don't get me wrong. If my only choices are between two kinds of statism, I'll take the one that weighs less heavily on my own neck. If my only choices are between a German-style SocDem regime and the kind of right-to-work sweatshop that Tom DeLay and Jack Abramoff set up in the Marianas Islands, I'll take the former in a heartbeat.

But both models are run primarily in the interests of big business. To repeat an old illustration I never tire of trotting out, the Democrats are like a farmer who thinks it's more profitable in the long run to feed and house his livestock decently and work them in moderation, while the Republicans are like a farmer who thinks he'll come out ahead working them to death and replacing them. If you're going to be a plowhorse, it's

## Mother, Should I Trust the Government?

By Kevin Carson

*A commentary for the Center for a Stateless Society*

Let's start by getting a few things out of the way. I think the birthers are nuts, and the "death panel" nonsense is just that—nonsense on stilts. I've got no use at all for the Palin/Joe the Plumber/teabagger wing of the GOP. I'm alarmed by said wing's tendencies toward brownshirtism (as chronicled by David Neiwert among others), and the astroturf mobs organized by insurance industry stooges like Dick Armey and Rick Scott to disrupt town hall meetings. And as strongly as I believe in the right to keep and bear arms, I think anyone who shows up at a public appearance by the President packing heat is probably missing some attic insulation. All that being said, Keith Olbermann has really gone over the top with his sanctimonious attacks on "conspiracy theorists" and people who "actually fear their own government." I get the impression he wouldn't think much more of Noam Chomsky's view of the world, or Howard Zinn's, than he does of the right-wingers'. Olbermann's view of the world doesn't have much room for anything but plain old vanilla-flavored managerial liberalism.

I suppose if you broke down Olbermann's view of the question for analysis, it would probably go something like this: Sure, horrible things happened under Bush and his minions, but they were aberrations. They did not result from the inherent nature of government, and anyone who suggests otherwise is a nutcase. The solution is simply to put the right people in control of government, so government can perform its default function as a progressive instrument for "all of us working together." In soccer mom parlance, the good guys, the "working families who sit around the kitchen table," are also the people who "play by the rules." And "the rules," a la "Why Mommy is a Democrat," are just the sensible way that "all of us, working together," come up with to make the system work in "everybody's interest" with a minimum of muss and fuss.

But if you look at the actual history of the state, the "right people" were apparently never in charge. As I pointed out in an earlier commentary



### 1. The Taliban, 2008

According to Christian Science Monitor ([www.tinyurl.com/npfm4x](http://www.tinyurl.com/npfm4x)) the Taliban is on the rise thanks to their ability to provide security for the privileged.

In several provinces close to Kabul, the government's presence is vanishing or already nonexistent, residents say. In its place, a more effective – and brutal – Taliban shadow government is spreading and winning local support.

"The police are just for show," one local says. "The Taliban are the real power here."

Widespread disillusionment with rampant crime, corrupt government, and lack of jobs has fueled the Taliban's rise to de facto power. Independent political analyst Waheed Muzhda says the Taliban's advance from the south toward Kabul resembles their progression when they first took power 12 years ago. In both cases, he says, they won support by bringing law and order.

### 2. Fighting Fundamentalism in Pakistan

The Washington Post ([www.tinyurl.com/lh6jfb](http://www.tinyurl.com/lh6jfb)) describes how fundamentalists are being fought by local militias in Pakistan.

Authorities have tried various methods, first using the army to attempt to quash the rebels, and more recently negotiating truces with individual militia groups. Thousands of conflict-zone inhabitants, terrified by government bombing and insurgent brutality, have fled their homes. Few local officials dare visit their constituencies without military escorts.

A few tribal leaders, however, have refused to budge and are urging others to do the same. One of the first was Anwar Kamal Marwat, a former member of Parliament, who decided to organize a self-defense force in 2007 after Taliban militias began kidnapping and threatening people in his native Lakki Marwat district, demanding their support for a holy war.

"They kept threatening us, but our tribe is very united and every village went on alert. We wanted to stop them before the cancer spread. It took many months, but now all their camps are gone, and they have not been back."

Marwat's success has been both an inspiration to other vulnerable communities and an embarrassment to the government, whose police are supposed to keep order and whose army is supposed to fight extremists.

According to village council head, Fahim ur Rahman, "If our tribe were not so united, we would have no hope of defending ourselves. We do not have permission to do this, but we have no choice."

3. Hamas - "Social influence grew into political influence" UPI (<http://tinyurl.com/hz32e>) describes how providing services helped Hamas grow.

After 1967, a great part of the success of the Hamas/Muslim Brotherhood was due to their activities among the refugees of the Gaza Strip. The cornerstone of the Islamic movements success was an impressive social, religious, educational and cultural infrastructure, called Da'wah, that worked to ease the hardship of large numbers of Palestinian refugees, confined to camps, and many who were living on the edge.

"Social influence grew into political influence," first in the Gaza Strip, then on the West Bank, said an administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

A further factor of Hamas' growth was the fact the PLO moved its base of operations to Beirut in the '80s, leaving the Islamic organization to grow in influence in the Occupied Territories "as the court of last resort," he said.



4. According to *Shadow Warriors: Inside the Special Forces* (Clancy, Stiner, Koltz, 2002), unconventional - "special" warfare also has

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/108054.pdf> (Order Code RS22926, see table on page 2/5).

- (2) <http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSN2921527420080302>

- (3) Ulrich, Aaron (Editor); (2005 & 2006) (Box set, Color, Dolby, DVD-Video, Full Screen, NTSC). Heart of Darkness: The Vietnam War Chronicles 1945-1975. [Documentary]. Koch Vision. Event occurs at 321 minutes. ISBN 1-4172-2920-9.

- (4) Vietnam war-eyewitness books; Iraq and Vietnam: Differences, Similarities and Insights, (2004: Strategic Studies Institute)]

- (5) <http://www.vietnamgear.com/casualties.aspx>

- (6) Scames, John. A History of the World, Routledge, 2005.

- (7) Krivosheev G. F., Russia and the USSR in the wars of the 20th century: losses of the Armed Forces. A Statistical Study Greenhill 1997 ISBN 1-85367-280-7 (Russian)

- (8) Philip Shenon, 20 Years After Victory

- (9) The landmark series Vietnam: A Television History, first broadcast in 1983, is a special presentation of the award-winning PBS history series, American Experience.

- (10) Wiener, Tim, Legacy of Ashes, 2007

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It is again nothing but a scam. The slaughter of millions does not protect American homes and lives. Suicidal terrorists can be prevented from crashing planes into buildings by armed air crews and armed passengers, not by mad violations of civil liberties at the airports.

Most importantly, the death merchants have made billions in revenues, once again. This time some of the names have changed - consolidation in the death cartel in restraint of trade is merciless. But Halliburton, KBR, the mercenaries formerly known as Blackwater, and Boeing continue to sell death to a government that continues to buy it with stolen tax dollars.

One of the lasting consequences of the protests over the Vietnam war was the end of the military draft. We killed the draft through our protests, including our violent protests. Americans won't be conscripted, or there will be more rioting, and a revolution. The powers that be know this fact, and are right to be afraid.

We know where they live. The Internet is a powerful tool for research. We know where the owners of the death merchant companies live. We know where the politicians who voted for war live. We know where many of the senior bureau-rats live. And they should be afraid.

Burning the ROTC barracks on college campuses, confronting the federalised national guard, sacrificing lives and suffering injuries, the anti-war protestors and anti-government protestors were able to end the war, end the draft, and end Nixon. We did it before, we can do it again. And we should.

Because the cost in lives and treasure is not worth bearing. There is nothing about slaughtering children in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, or anywhere else that makes Americans safer. But the war machine does it, and loves doing it. The war mongers are covered in the blood of innocents. It is time, once again, to make them pay.

#### ----- References

(1) Daggett, Stephen (24 July 2008), CRS Report to Congress : Costs of Major U.S. Wars, Foreign press center, US Department of State,

other facets... Helping people in trouble - with medical aid, organizational advice and counsel, assistance in building bridges and roads, and getting clean water - is another.

“Helping people” usually comes under the rubric of civil affairs (CA), a tool that's been in the special operations kit nearly as long as PSYOPs. There are many justifications for CA, including simple goodness, but its main military one is this: A population that is friendly to you and has experienced your kindness is not likely to feel kindly to - or give help and support to - your enemy. [pg 59]

Hopefully nobody reading this thinks libertarians should be more like fundamentalist terrorists or the US government. The lessons provided by the above groups can only be applied to the libertarian struggle after being filtered through libertarian ideology.

The Alliance of the Libertarian Left ought to encourage self-liberation and individual empowerment. Projects that ALLies involve themselves in shouldn't seek monopoly or exclusivity. They should inclusively demonstrate principles and encourage people to build the institutions they need. Adherence to the principles of left libertarianism is desired over allegiance to the group pushing them.

Improving communities in ways that displace state power include the following:

1. Providing security and stability. This doesn't need to involve armed militias (though this will sometimes be appropriate). It can mean anarchists watching out for and countering actual crimes, brokering peace between street gangs, monitoring and countering authoritarian groups by appropriate and proportional means, building community solidarity, and countering the blue-light gang through Copwatch type action.
2. Arbitration. The counter-economy described by agorists encourages the creation of arbitration agencies that can operate for money or mutual aid. Arbitrators could attract customers by offering better service than the state court system and by raising anti-state consciousness. For more on counter economics and

agorist justice systems, see the writings of Samuel Edward Konkin III.

3. Infrastructure and economic improvement. The myriad ways to improve communities include sharing of food through networks like Food Not Bombs, community gardening, litter cleanups (open firearms carry activists do this), counter-establishment education (see the ALL zine *Liberating Learning*), beautification (fixing decaying walls, painting murals, putting in plants, etc), building alternate trade networks or bazars, neighbors pitching in to fix potholes in roads, and workers organizing into radical unions to give them a stake in infrastructure.

Note that intentional spreading of left libertarian ideas should be an essential part of all projects. Contextualizing an action as an advance toward liberty encourages more actions. The degree to which the ideas should be pushed depends on the circumstances.

Another consideration is the potential trade-off between publicity and security. It is sometimes possible to use openness and community ties as defensive weapons.

Of course, it is usually a good idea to research past or current projects that are similar to ones you are attempting.

The influence of left libertarians can grow if we effectively help people prosper, especially during otherwise hard times when the state-capitalist order fails to provide. Taking action now can show people what anarchy can do for them, not in calculations or sci-fi, but in their lives.

#### Endnote:

The concept of "soft power" may be helpful. See <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/4290.html>

"Everyone is familiar with hard power. We know that military and economic might often get others to change their position. Hard power can rest on inducements ("carrots") or threats ("sticks"). But sometimes you can get the outcomes you want without tangible threats or payoffs. The indirect way to get what you want has sometimes been called "the second

Americans rioted. They burned out the ROTC barracks on several campuses. They protested against the war mongers in the CIA being allowed to recruit on campus. They ended campus recruitment for the military for many years.

Journalists, not yet entirely corrupted by the establishment, did some impressive work ferreting out the Pentagon papers and proving the facts of the Watergate scandal - felony acts committed with the direct knowledge of the president. Nixon, a racist, xenophobic, homophobic bigot war monger and depraved mass murderer was removed from office, forced to resign in disgrace. That he was not tried for treason, convicted, and executed is a shame Americans have had to live with.

That his cronies like Dick Cheney and Don Rumsfeld were not convicted of treason, or other crimes, and executed or imprisoned, but, rather, left free to run further treasonous escapades more recently is also a lasting shame. That Kissinger has not been deported to the World Court to stand trial for crimes against humanity is a shame.

Nevertheless, the peace process begun in 1972, the war protest process begun in the 1960s, and the exposure of corruption and betrayal had many important and lasting results. Eventually, the Soviet Union's grip on a vast region was shattered. The hobgoblin of global communism was revealed to be a hollow threat. And for nearly a decade, a peace dividend was available - until another hobgoblin, this time of global Islamism was raised to frighten people out of their

#### **HUGE CIA OPERATION REPORTED IN U.S. AGAINST ANTIWAR FORCES, OTHER DISSIDENTS IN NIXON YEARS**

And so we have had the recruiters come back to campus to encourage men and women to go off and slaughter babies in foreign countries. We have had the CIA back on campus to recruit assassins, liars, and



THIS 68 CITIZENS to campus to encourage men and women to go off and slaughter babies in foreign countries. We have had the CIA back on campus to recruit assassins, liars, and

rapists. Another war, with millions more casualties, not only in Iraq but also in Afghanistan and by proxy in Somalia has interrupted many lives. And individual liberty is again under assault.

About 1.2 million North Vietnamese military were killed or missing and about 600,000 wounded (3, 6). People's Republic of China lost 1,446 military dead, about 4,200 wounded. The Soviet Union had about 16 military dead (7).

So, what did we get out of this bloody mess? Whatever strategic value Vietnam had to France was lost. Although the USA tried to take over the war effort after 1954, and spent a huge amount in lives and treasure, the war was lost. Whatever strategic importance it had as a "domino" in the fight against global communism - as nonsensical a hobgoblin as has ever been raised up to scare people into supporting the establishment, was also lost.



The war was hugely profitable to death merchants. Evil companies like Boeing and Lockheed and Bell Helicopter run by blood spattered homunculi were able to make enormous profits from the war by corruptly allocated contracts. Depraved politicians like LBJ went to bed every night of the war a little richer in treasure, a little more damned to perdition. Bureau-rats had lots of jobs to distribute all this stolen wealth.

But it was basically a scam. There was no strategic interest worthy of all that killing. There was no need to slaughter all those civilians. There was only greed and viciousness, corruption, and abuse of power. The war was never declared, so not authorised by the constitution, and the escalation in 1964 was based on a lie - the Gulf of Tonkin incident never happened, and the NSA released documentary proof of this fact in 2005. LBJ himself said that the sailors were shooting at "flying fish" and knew, all along, that there had been no attack on US naval vessels in international waters. LBJ lied and millions died (10).

The good part is that Americans resisted the war. They resisted the draft. They refused to serve. They began a campaign of resistance in the military, with soldiers preferring to serve in the stockade rather than at a duty station where they would have to kill civilians.

face of power." A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries admire its values, emulate its example, aspire to its level of prosperity and openness. This soft power—getting others to want the outcomes that you want—co-opts people rather than coerces them.

"Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others. In the business world, smart executives know that leadership is not just a matter of issuing commands, but also involves leading by example and attracting others to do what you want. Similarly, contemporary practices of community-based policing rely on making the police sufficiently friendly and attractive that a community wants to help them achieve shared objectives."

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### The Cost of Vietnam By Jim Davidson

*Credit to the Libertarian Enterprise [www.ncc-1776.org](http://www.ncc-1776.org)*

The Vietnam war had a very high cost in lives, in treasure, and in loss of individual liberty at home. It also prompted a series of protests, including many very violent protests, including some where the government brutally responded with murder. As a result of these protests and the general pointlessness of the war, some things changed, for a time.

In my essay about the Vietnamization of Iraq (<http://www.ncc-1776.org/tle2009/tle525-20090628-03.html>), I pointed out the difficulty with the currency that LBJ faced. He had a lot of money to create out of nothing, so he got rid of the silver in the coinage. This prompted many banks overseas, including a lot of banks holding French government money, to redeem dollars for gold. The price of gold went up, and soon everyone wanted in on the "sure deal" of selling a hundred ounces of gold for \$4,200 and redeeming those dollars for 120 ounces of gold - to be redeemed again.

To give you some idea of the scale of this insane monetary policy, the

USA military was called upon to airlift gold to London to be redeemed for dollars. So much gold was placed on the weighing floor at Rothschild's in London at one point that the entire floor collapsed into the basement. This event closed the London redemptions for about two weeks. Someone of a cynical frame of mind might suppose that the event was staged. But the market soon moved to Switzerland when the gnomes of Zurich began offering redemptions, and so the London market re-opened. If you want to know more about these events, check out the London Gold Pool, the name given to the deliberate cartel in restraint of trade that attempted to limit world gold prices between 1961 and 1968 (when it was abandoned as unworkable).

So why all this focus on monetary policy? It is important to know why things are so screwed up, and monetary policy is often the lynch pin for other government policies - war policy, trade policy, foreign policy, and fiscal policy. Understanding Vietnam in the context of other 20th Century wars that were financed by austerity programs - meatless, sweetless, and wheatless days among civilians who purchased war bonds, victory bonds, and had Milton Friedman withhold their pay as an emergency war measure - it is important to know that Vietnam was funded by inflation. All wars since then have, as well.



**Why?** Because the establishment powers that be are afraid of the people. Austerity today would mean reduced pensions for the elderly, reduced medical coverage for the elderly, reduced unemployment compensation, and rioting in the streets. After all, it has happened before.

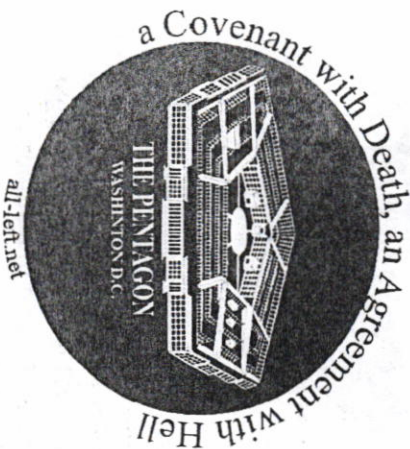
If Vietnam was paid for with inflation, what did that buy? One source says that "Between 1965 and 1975, the United States spent \$111 billion on the war.(1)" Today, that doesn't seem like a lot of money, really. So how much was that worth in today's dollars?

Well, the price of gold gives a good comparison. Then the price of gold averaged about \$45 per ounce over the period. Today the price of gold is about \$930 per ounce. That means that the dollar's value has

fallen by a factor of about 20.7. Put another way, it would take about \$2.3 trillion today to have the same buying power.

By way of comparison, the direct spending on the Iraq war so far has been \$648 billion for the USA government, with costs extending into the future of caring for injured veterans, etc., running into the trillions. By another estimate, the Iraq war has cost the American economy about \$3 trillion (2).

In terms of lives, the figures are staggering. Altogether about 7.9 million people were killed or injured, including combat casualties on both sides, and civilian casualties. USA military deaths included 58,159 killed in the war (3) about 2,000 missing, and 303,635 wounded (4). (Considering the life-changing, and life expectancy reducing nature of many of these wounds it is important to include them in the toll of lives lost or permanently altered. Remind an injured vet how sorry you are that the government sent them to war.)



The inflicted toll of lives lost or altered forever is much higher.

Consider the South Vietnamese military, which lost 220,357 dead and about 1.17 million wounded (3). South Korea sent troops and 4,960 died while 10,962 were wounded; Laos lost about 30,000 killed (5).

Australia sent troops and 520 died (3) while 2,400 were wounded. New Zealand, 37 dead, 187 wounded; Thailand, 1,351 dead (3).

Civilians in South Vietnam killed in the war - about 1.58 million (3).

Civilians in Cambodia killed - often by USA bombing, about 700,000.

North Vietnamese civilians were slaughtered in very large numbers, again often by bombing campaigns. Estimates vary up to about two million dead (8). About fifty thousand civilians in Laos were killed.